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ABSTRACT

This unit of study explains how students, using picture books whose stories simplify various language arts themes and concepts, will apply and extend themes and concepts to grade level tasks. The unit adds that, along with the appropriate grade level mastery of the language arts Sunshine State Standards, an added benefit will be that students will more readily adapt and apply literature and writing skills learned after instruction begins with picture books. The unit is divided into the following sections: Goals and Objectives; Course Outline; Assessment Techniques and Outcomes; Adaptability and Resources; Lesson Plans and Samples; and Bibliography (7 resource books and 23 picture books). (NKA)

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Worth a Thousand Words
Using Picture Books to Teach Literary Elements

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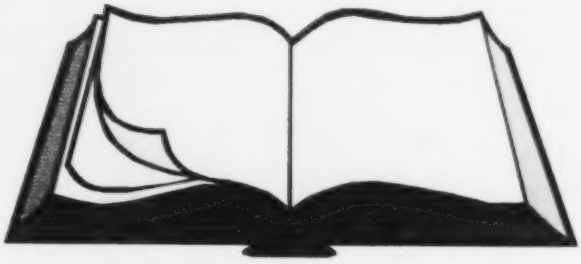

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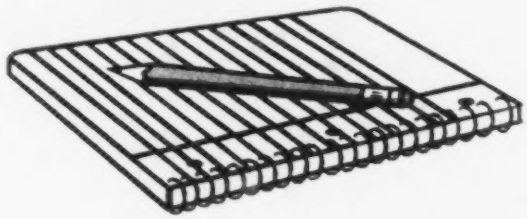


Goals and Objectives

Using picture books whose stories simplify various language arts themes and concepts, students will apply and extend themes and concepts to grade level tasks. Students will use disposable cameras to gather photographs for use as subjects for writing that demonstrates students' synthesis of the writing process concepts in the language arts curriculum. Completed projects from picture book lessons and photographs will truly show that "a picture is worth a thousand words!"

- 95% of the students will produce at least one piece of writing during each unit theme.
- 75% of the students will show at least a one point growth in practice writing assessments.
- 95% of the students will read, explore, and evaluate a theme from one of the novels studied during the year and complete a final assessment of the novel.
- 90% of the students will use a disposable camera to successfully gather photographs for writing project.
- 90% of the students will publish a piece of writing and mount accompanying photographs using literary devices and writing traits studied during the year.

Along with the appropriate grade level mastery of the language arts Sunshine State Standards, an added benefit will be that students will more readily adapt and apply literature and writing skills learned after instruction begins with picture books. Students' synthesis of literary devices will begin with a simplified, though high quality, version using children's literature. Evaluation of the effective writing found in the picture books will help ease student understanding of how the writing process works, helping them to take ownership of the writing process for themselves. Students will also benefit from the photograph activity because they will be actively choosing the writing subjects in their photos as topics for writing pieces. Students will more readily demonstrate high quality writing traits through generation of their own photos.

Course Outline

The timeline for implementation will be as follows:

First Nine Weeks Theme-Exploring the Me I'm Learning to Be-Picture books used will be *On the Day You Were Born* by Debra Frasier, *Weird Parents* by Audrey Wood, *The Pain and the Great One* by Judy Blume, and *Teach Us, Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish. Students will read grade level passages on the themes and will write their own personal histories. Students will research events from history correlating with events in their lives using the Internet. Students will also read the picture book, *The Old Dog* by Charlotte Zolotow in preparation for study of the novel, *Sounder*, by William Armstrong. Literary concepts studied will include setting, plot, character, foreshadowing, and conflict. The picture book, *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move* by Judith Viorst will help students write to persuasive prompts related to the novel, *Sounder*.

Second Nine Weeks Theme-Trading Places: What Does Disability Really Mean? Picture books related to the theme will be read such as *Sleeping Ugly* by Jan Yolen, *White Socks Only* by Albert Whitman, and *To Hell With Dying* by Alice Walker. Guest speakers, participation in simulation activities, and reading various short stories and novels related to the theme will follow. Students' choices of activities will include compiling A,B,C books on the theme using Chris Van Allsburg's *The Z Was Zapped* and Margaret Musgrove's *Ashanti to Zulu* as examples and writing modern fables using Jon Scieszka's *Squid Will Be Squids* and *The Frog Prince, Continued*.

Third Nine Weeks Theme-Building Bridges to Your Future-During this unit, students will explore various careers. In preparation for research, students will read Dr. Seuss' *You're Only Old Once* and *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. Students will write about their experiences and memories using various literary devices. Reading Mem Fox's *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, Judith Viorst's *The Good-Bye Book*, and Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey*. Students' editing and publishing of quality writing will be enhanced by first reading picture books in which writing concepts are enticing and easy to follow. Activities to strengthen simple and complex editorial skills are found in Jennie Maizels and Kate Petty's *The Amazing Pop-Up Grammar Book*.

Fourth Nine Weeks Theme-Survival: Learning From Life's Rules, Rituals and Regulations-During this theme students will be examining their world through different viewpoints as they prepare to study Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. Students will use Istvan Banyai's colorful and wordless picture books, *Zoom* and *ReZoom* to explore how organization makes all the difference in final writing pieces.

Students will use disposable cameras to gather their own photographs of the world. Using these photographs, students will produce pieces of writing that demonstrate successful integration of writing concepts learned throughout the year. Students will mount photographs and writing for display in the media center using the school's computer lab and materials purchased from grant funds

After reading and studying picture books and photographs, students apply simplified themes and concepts to grade level reading, literature, and writing tasks. Students read picture books related to themes covered in class. Through analysis of picture books that show literature concepts such as plot, theme, figurative language, foreshadowing, point of view, word choice, flashback, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, characterization, and persuasion techniques on a simple level, students are able to synthesize concepts and apply knowledge to grade level materials. Study and dissection of picture book stories enable students to link important writing concepts to their own writing. Students learn the criteria for good writing and are able to internalize it.

As each unit theme was introduced, the teacher read various picture books that related to each theme. Students then moved more efficiently to grade level reading/writing that accompanied each theme. Students used disposable cameras to gather photographs for use as stimuli for various pieces of writing. Effective writing traits were demonstrated included the following: organization of ideas and details that enrich and develop theme; internal structure of the piece; recognition of writer's voice; use of rich, colorful, and precise language; fluency of sentence and word patterns; mechanical correctness of the writing, including spelling, grammar, usage, paragraphing, capitalization, and punctuation. Deceptively simple, picture storybooks have the advantage of teaching complex literary devices and writing skills in an accessible format to students of all levels.

Assessment Techniques:

- comparison of student *Writes Upon Request* scores from beginning to end of school year through the maintenance of writing portfolios of each student
- individual student assessment of each language arts assignments keyed Leon County Benchmarks documented by the teacher in lesson plan book and grade book
- assessment of final photograph writing project
- appraisal of comprehension/discussion assessments on short works and novels
- teacher evaluation of students' group photograph project

Outcomes:

- 95% of the students produced at least one piece of writing during each unit theme.
- 67% of the students showed at least a one point growth in practice writing assessments.
- 95% of the students read, explored, and evaluated a theme from one of the novels studied during the year and completed a final assessment of the novel.
- 90% of the students used a disposable camera to successfully gather photographs for writing.
- 90% of the students published a piece of writing and mounted accompanying photographs using literary devices and writing traits studied during the year.

Along with the appropriate grade level mastery of the language arts Sunshine State Standards, an added benefit was that students more readily adapted and applied literature and writing skills learned after instruction began with picture books. Students' synthesis of literary devices began with a simplified, though high quality, version using children's literature. Evaluation of the effective writing found in the picture books helped ease student understanding of how the writing process works, helping them to take ownership of the writing process for themselves. Students benefited from the photograph activity because they were actively choosing the writing subjects in their photos as topics for writing pieces. Students more readily demonstrated high quality writing traits through generation of their own photos.

The project addressed school's goals when students located, comprehended, interpreted, evaluated, maintained, and applied information concepts and ideas found in literature in order to improve reading skills. Students read and wrote using high quality young adult literature and topics. Reading strategies were incorporated into the lessons using picture books as springboards to grade level materials. Students also improved writing skills. This project guided students to produce pieces of writing with more consistency and accuracy. Students' dissection of good writing traits through picture books improved their writing assessment scores as well as their writing tasks in other areas. The project helped students use the reading process effectively and practice constructing meaning from a wide range of texts. The writing process was used in writing lessons employing topics in each unit. Communicating ideas and information learned effectively was seen in student writing samples. Students practiced listening, viewing, and speaking strategies by listening to oral reading, viewing, and evaluating sample photographs and speaking to class partners in completing various projects during the year. A variety of literature was read and studied so

that students better understood and responded critically to the fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama studied during each unit. Students wrote to some of the picture book authors who responded quite favorably to the way middle school students used their books. Fellow teachers, students and parents have responded favorably to this project.

Adaptability

This project is adaptable to students of all ages and levels. Regardless of age and grade level, students all need careful, step-by-step learning experiences when comprehending a new concept. As with younger children, the place to begin is enjoyment. Picture books, however, go beyond personal pleasure and aesthetic satisfaction. They help the reader build greater awareness of language and offer opportunities to explore and learn the conventions. Picture books remain a valuable resource in the classroom for students and adults.

Teachers would want to adapt this project because picture books are models for many different concepts. Picture books suggest both conventional and innovative forms that still leave room for creative elements. The great variety of ways in which authors and illustrators offer their work makes picture books such a valuable resource. Books that are unable to be purchased can usually be borrowed from the library, making the project very reasonably priced for any classroom.

Materials and Resources

This project requires the teacher securing a variety of picture books, either purchased or borrowed. The books are read and discussed orally in the classroom to introduce new concepts in the curriculum. Guest authors, either in person or via letters and email, enhance the success of the picture book lessons. Before participating in the photograph project, students listened to a guest photographer who helped them in selection of photo subject.

Sample Lesson Plan

As a pre-reading activity for William Armstrong's *Sounder*, we will discuss the theme, LEARNING THROUGH LOSS. Students write a warm-up journal about a time when they have lost something or someone the valued. Students share their journal entries with the class or a partner and discussion follows. After writing, sharing, and discussing the journal, the teacher reads aloud the picture book, *The Old Dog* by Charlotte Zolotow. Students are able to transfer concepts from the picture book to their study of the novel. The picture book author's insight into a universal experience--the hurt and confusion a child feels after his first encounter with death--is poignantly told through the words and illustrations in the picture book. Students then begin the novel study of *Sounder* with a clearer understanding of the author's theme.

Instructional Objectives:

The student will--

- explore the author's purpose and point of view in a simple text
- use strategies to clarify understanding by rereading, self-correction, note-taking, summarizing, checking other sources, and class or group discussion
- listen and respond appropriately to oral presentation of story
- identify the major theme in a story and explores historical approaches

Learning Through Loss Journal

My Father by Sixth Grade Student

When I was little, very little, I lost something that to me was priceless. On that day, I lost my father, something that is indefinably precious. When he died, I was too young to understand, but now I feel the deep sense of heartache and loss.

Now I am twelve years old, and even though my mother has remarried a kind and wonderful man, I am still crushed by the loss. Sometimes I still cry myself to sleep. At other times, my mother and I talk about his death, and how he loved me very much. He very much wanted to live to see my sister and I grow up. There have also been many times that I just needed a good, loyal, kind, and caring friend to comfort me. Fortunately, my youth group has always been there for me.

The memories of yesterday will never be today, though, no matter how hard I wish. My scrapbook and home videos help ease the pain, although sometimes, no matter what I do, his death still throbs like an open wound. It hurts! But they say that healing comes hand in hand with hurt.

There was always a place for me to escape to. School was always my main ally. Also, I've always been able to find help in my mom.

I loved my father dearly, even at such a tender age, and, of course, that only made separation by death even more difficult. My only consolation from all of this is that someday I will meet him in the beautiful place I know as heaven.

Learning Through Loss Journal
My Dad by Seventh Grade Student

My dad's name was Rafel Gonzalez. My dad was a really good man when I was very small. One thing I loved about him was that when I would cry he would pick me up and I would be all right. When I started to grow up, there were times when he would disappear on my mom and I. This really upset me. I would stay up waiting for him because he would always come home late. When I was 5 or 6, my mom took my dad to a drug program to help him. I didn't really understand what was going on at the time. Finally, it was too hard for my mom, so we moved to Tallahassee from New York. My mom did this so that we would be away from my dad. My dad left the drug program without finishing the program and followed us t o Tallahassee. This made my mom really mad. My parents argued, and I didn't hear from my dad for a long time. On my 11th birthday my aunt found my dad, and she gave me his phone number. I called him, and after a few months, I went to see him in Delaware. I was very happy. After that, he didn't call me back for two years. When I was 13 years old, he called. He told me that he had cancer. I went in my room and cried for a long time. He was in the hospital a long time. The cancer spread even more, and he passed away. I loved him a lot even though he did a lot of really bad things, not only to my mom and I but to himself.

Family Position Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan: In preparation for the study of point of view in literary works, teacher reads the Judy Blume picture book, *The Pain and the Great One*. Students discuss advantages and disadvantages to various positions in the family. Students are able to see that this picture book is written from the point of view of two family members and that their stories present two distinctly different points of view. Students then write about their position in their family. Later students are able to understand how point of view in grade level reading passages affects the literary work.

Student Samples:

My Family Position by Sixth Grade Student

Being the oldest child in my family, I have several advantages that my siblings don't share. The first advantage to being the oldest child in the family is that I get special privileges. For example, I get to talk on the phone, stay up late, and go to the mall with my friends. The second advantage is that I get to tell my little brother and sisters what to do, since I'm the oldest. I remember when my mother let me baby-sit for my brother who was eight, and my baby sister who was only eight weeks old. I bossed them around. The third advantage is that I get a bigger allowance than my brother. I get at least five dollars more than he does every week! I like being the oldest because I have privileges, I get to boss people, and I get more money!

My Family Position by Sixth Grade Student

There are a lot of advantages to being the middle child. One reason is because I'm the only girl, or should I say I'm a mommy's girl. For example, when I do overtime work and then go to the store, she gets things for me, like clothes, shoes, and hair ties. My second reason is I never have to do many jobs because I'm a girl. For example, whenever we have to do an hour of work, all I have to do is dust or vacuum. My third and last reason is that I get money and clothes. For example, when I go to the mall, I get a lot of clothes. Well, all in all, I think I have it made as the middle child!

My Family Position by Sixth Grade Student

There are disadvantages to being the baby in the family. The first is, if anyone gets mad at me, they can beat me up. For example, if I say something they don't like they can pound me! Second, if I try to pull a trick, I usually get caught because my brothers and sisters have already tried it. Third, they get everything before me, as far as dates, going to the mall, and of course, driving. Fourth, my bedtime is about an hour earlier than theirs. Fifth, I'm the last to know things, like just the other day, my sisters went to get tickets to the ice show for the family and I never know that until after they had left. Sixth, I hate being called the baby. When I meet someone, they'll say, "So, you're the baby of the family." I hate that! So, you can see why I don't like being the baby.

Family Position Paragraph Language Arts

DIRECTIONS: After discussion in your class and a pre-writing activity that your teacher will explain, you must write a paragraph focusing on the advantages OR the disadvantages of being in the position you are within your family structure. Your paragraph must begin with a good topic sentence. Some sample topic sentences are as follows:

There are many advantages (or disadvantages) to being the "baby" in my family.

Being the oldest child in my family has several disadvantages (or advantages) that my siblings don't share.

I really love (or hate) being the "middle child" in my family for a variety of reasons.

After you write your topic sentence, you must write three reasons that explain what the advantages or disadvantages are, and with each reason, you must write another sentence that gives a specific example of exactly HOW it is an advantage or disadvantage. An example follows:

First, it is an advantage to be the youngest in the family because most of the time, I don't have to do many chores around the house. My parents automatically ask my big sister to vacuum, do the dishes, and the laundry, and my brother to clean the bathrooms, but somehow they forget to ask me to help.

When you have finished writing the three detail sentences and the three example sentences for each, you need to write a good concluding sentence to close the paragraph. An example follows:

All in all, being the "baby" in the family is fun since I really have very few chores, I usually get my way about what we watch on television, and my parents are so mellow now that I get to do things that my sister and brother had to be sixteen to do!

You must also use at least three transitional words to help your sentences flow smoothly. Circle the transition words as you use them.

DUE DATE _____

Your paper must be written neatly in blue or black ink or typed.

Cool Cub Chronicles
Personal Newsletter Requirements

You will be completing a personal newsletter using Microsoft 4.0 software in the computer lab. Although you will work with a partner at the computer, each student will complete his/her own newsletter. Partners will help each other proofread, edit, and format the newsletter. Your newsletter will be assessed using the requirements listed below.

10 • Title or Header: Think of a catchy title for your newsletter. You may include either your first or last name. You may use alliteration in the title to grab the reader's attention.

10 • Picture: You should include one picture in the newsletter. The picture may be one you bring from home to scan and copy into the newsletter or one you find during the internet activities to copy from the internet.

25 • "On the Day You Were Born Story": You will type the final draft of your personal story as an article in your newsletter. Make sure that you and your partner have each completed a "Peer Response Form" and that all editing has been done to your story.

15 • Advertisement: Write an ad about yourself. Use real newspaper ads as models. The ad should be "selling" something you could really do to help someone else.

15 Your Choice: Include at least one other article from the choices below.

• COLORS: Write about your experience completing the COLORS activities in our class. You may use your COLORS journal for this article.

• Favorite Something: Write an article about your favorite food, animal, sport, teacher, or any other favorite thing you can think about. You may use the internet or on-line encyclopedia to gather facts for this article.

• Person in Your Life: Write an article about your best friend or a special family member. Why is this person very special to you? Tell about your relationship with this person. How has the relationship changed you over time?

25 • Following Directions: You will be assessed on how well you are your partner follow all directions in the computer lab. Remember to follow computer lab rules at all times. Use COPS strategy to edit your articles.

100 TOTAL

Amber's World

Volume 1, Issue 2 November 9,199

AMBER'S DAY

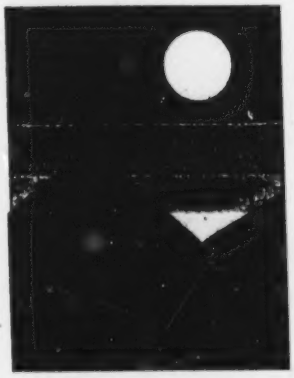
On the day I was born, my family came from all over to see their new cousin, neise, granddaughter but most of all to see their new child. Because I looked like a jewel I was named Amber Leigh Stephens.

With dark brown hair, brown eyes, and 1/8 of Spanish blood I take after my dad. Excited family couldn't stop smiling even though I had colic. I wouldn't let anyone hold me except my mom, so everyone thought I was going to be a mama's girl. WRONG! Little daddy's girl loved to go to football and baseball games.

Meanwhile, championships were taking place. The L.A. Lakers beat Boston to win the NBA title. The Giants beat Denver 39-20 to win the Super bowl XXI. U.S.A'S yacht club "Star's and Stripes" defeated Australia's Kookaburra 3.

Going to the grocery stor with 20 bucks and having money left over was easy, back then. "I'm going tothe store to get milk, bread, a packet of stamps, and 5 gallons of gas." "O.K." With a total of $8.83, I wish the prices were still like that so we could all have more. That was the good times. I think that my family picked the best name out of thousands, and I will always be a jewel. That jewel born on July 21,1987.

That Special Someone



It's hope to see views such as this on our family's ski trip.

There's one person in my family that I really like. That's my stepmom Julie. Why? Well, we both have a lot in common. We both like to shop, wish that everything had a lower price,we both like skiing, and other ice sports, and we both love each other. There are many other things but that's what we have most in common. Something that makes our relationship special is that she likes antiques and I like newer things. But that's what makes our relationship really special. Our relationship has grown stronger just when we do things together and that makes us happy.

CAN"T READ?
Amber Stephens will help you for $10 a hr. From a 3rd read level to a 8th grade level, all in a mth.! Call 884-9210.

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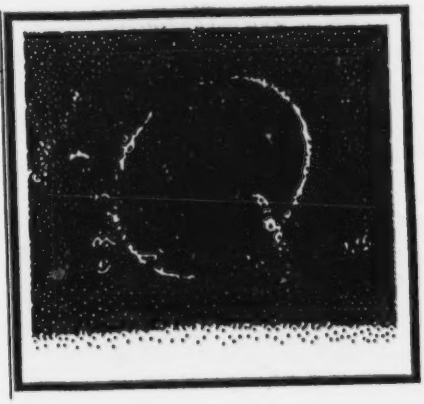

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